

Chapter 10

Human Resources

The Human Resources Division provides support to the REE mission area agencies in the categories of position classification, recruitment and staffing, pay and leave, employee development and training, orientation, employee benefits, awards, performance, employee conduct and discipline, and other human resources activities as related to the employees within the mission area.

References to frequently used human resources-related policies and procedures in ARS are listed below. Other human resources-related policies and procedures can be found in ARS Directives numbered 400-499.

Abbreviations: See Chapter 22 for commonly used acronyms and abbreviations.

References: Circular 95-1 - "Secretarial Orientation Plan Checklist"
P&P 105.1- ARS Research Associate Program
P&P 402.1- Maxiflex Tour of Duty Plans for ARS
P&P 402.3 - Premium Pay
P&P 402.5 - Flexible Workplace Arrangements
P&P 402.6 - Leave
P&P 411.1 - Personnel Records
P&P 411.2 - Preparing and Approving Requests for Personnel Actions, SF-52
P&P 412.2 - Appointment and Orientation of New Employees
P&P 412.5 - Recruitment, Relocation and Retention Payment
P&P 413.8 - Student and Volunteer Programs
P&P 418.2 - Appraisal of Probationary and Trial Period Employees
P&P 418.3 - Performance Appraisal System (includes within-grade increases)
P&P 418.6 - Supervisory and Managerial Probationary Periods
P&P 420.1 - Merit Promotion Plan
P&P 426.1 - Employee Exit Clearance Procedures
P&P 431.3 - Position Classification–Research Position Evaluation System
Manual 431.3 - Position Classification–Research Position Evaluation System
P&P 440.1 - Employee Training and Career Development
P&P 461.5 - Misconduct, Discipline and Adverse Actions
P&P 463.2 - Employee Grievances
P&P 468.5 - Outside Awards and Recognitions
- Guide for Employee Recognition (Blue Cover)

Cross References: Chapter 2 - Civil Rights
Chapter 7 - Ethics

Chapter 16 - RMIS
Chapter 17 - Research Position Evaluation System
Chapter 18 - Safety
Chapter 20 - Time and Attendance/Leave

Available Web Sites: Administrative and Financial Management - www.afm.ars.usda.gov
Human Resources Division - www.ars.usda.gov/afm/hrd
Student and Volunteer Programs - www.ars.usda.gov/arm2/ppweb/413-8.htm

Employment with ARS: Dial-a-Vacancy: (301) 504-1482
ARS Web Site: www.ars.usda.gov (Select Job Opportunities)

Employment Verification: Local LAO or Area Office (970) 229-5500

Point of Contact: Ms. Jan Jones
Personnel Assistant
USDA-ARS-NPA
1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 150
Fort Collins, CO 80525-5562
Telephone: (970) 229-5502
Fax: (970) 229-5536
E-Mail: jonesj@npa.ars.usda.gov

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Attach 1 | Glossary of Personnel Terms |
| Attach 2 | Position Category Codes |
| Attach 3 | The Hiring Process Summarized |
| Attach 4 | Research Associates/Affiliates |
| Attach 5 | Form REE-10 (Employee Exit Checklist) |
| Attach 6 | Performance Evaluations, IDP's and Awards |
| Attach 7 | Employee Suggestions |
| Attach 8 | Training Information (SF-182) |

FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE FOLLOWING - Contact your LAO office or Area Personnel Assistant

Request for Personnel Actions
Guidelines for Completing a Position Description
ARS Alternative Merit Promotion System (AMPS) Guidelines
Recruitment Procedures Under CTAP
Paid Advertisements for Recruitment
NPA Outreach Recruitment Effort and Student Employment Programs
Effect of Part-Time Employment on Rights and Benefits
Employment of Noncitizen in Temporary Research Positions
Postdoctoral Research Associate Citizenship Information
LAO Orientation Items

GLOSSARY OF PERSONNEL TERMS

Definitions

1. Applicant - A person who has asked to be considered for a job with an agency. An applicant may be a current employee of the agency, an employee of another agency, or a person who is not currently employed by any agency.
2. Appointment - Any personnel action which brings an individual onto the rolls (staff) of an agency.
3. Area of Consideration - The area in which the agency makes an intensive search for eligible candidates in a specific promotion action. The minimum area of consideration is the area designated by the promotion plan in which the agency should reasonably expect to locate enough high quality candidates to fill vacancies.
4. Career Appointment - Competitive service permanent appointment given to an employee who has completed 3 substantially continuous, creditable years of Federal Service. In special cases (such as Administrative Law Judges), career appointment may be given to a person at the time he/she is hired from a civil service register.
5. Career Conditional Appointment - Competitive service permanent appointment of a person who has not yet completed 3 years of creditable, substantially continuous Federal Service.
6. Change to Lower Grade - (also called "Demotion") - Personnel action which moves employees to (1) a position at a lower grade when both the old and new positions are under the General Schedule or under the same type graded wage schedule, or (2) an action which moves an employee to a position with a lower rate of basic pay when both the old and the new positions are under the same type ungraded wage schedule or in a different pay-method category.
7. Conversion - The changing of an employee from one appointment to another appointment in the same agency without a break in service. (For example, the process of changing an employee from a temporary appointment to a career-conditional appointment is done by means of a conversion action.)
8. Student Career Employment Program - Program under which a student may alternate periods of education and Federal employment under terms of an agreement between his/her school and a government agency. SCEP appointments have a provision for non-competitive conversion to a permanent or term appointment (not a guarantee) following graduation.
9. Effective Date - The date on which a personnel action takes place and on which the employee's official assignment begins.

10. EOD (Entry on Duty) - The process by which a person completes the necessary paperwork and is sworn in as an employee.
11. Excepted Service - Positions outside the competitive service and the Senior Executive Service. Excepted service positions have been excepted from the requirements of the competitive service by law, executive order, or OPM regulation.
12. Full Performance Level - That level of performance at which all of the most important duties and responsibilities of a properly classified position are carried out.
13. Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions (X-118) (tells what it takes to qualify for specific series/grades)-Part III contains specific standards for General Schedule positions, mostly of the "white collar" type. Qualification can be thru experience and/or education.
14. Merit Staffing Program - The system under which agencies consider an employee for vacant position on the basis of personal merit. Vacant positions are usually filled through competition with applicants being evaluated and ranked for the position on the basis of their experience, education, skills and performance record.
15. Noncompetitive Actions - Personnel actions based on prior service or prior competition and made without regard to civil service registers or eligibles or to the priorities required for making temporary appointments outside the register.
16. Personnel Action - The process necessary to appoint or remove or make other personnel changes. Effected on a Standard Form 50.
17. Placement/Staffing - Putting employees into jobs. This may be done by appointment of someone new to government; by promotion, change to lower grade, reassignment, or transfer within an agency or from other agencies of current employees; and by reinstatement of former employees.
18. Preference - Same as veteran preference. The right to special advantage or preferential treatment in some personnel actions under authority of veteran laws, or regulation or instruction issued under these laws.
19. Probationary period - Trial period which the OPM regards as a final and highly significant step in the examining process. It provides the final test, that of actual performance on the job, which no preliminary testing methods can approach in validity. It is during this period that the employee may be released without undue formality. The length of the probationary period is generally one year. Scientists appointed under the demo authority serve a 3-year probationary period.
20. Promotion - The change of an employee (1) to a position at a higher grade level within the same job classification system and pay schedule or (2) to position with a higher rate of basic pay in a different job classification and pay schedule.

21. Reinstatement - Non competitive reemployment in the competitive service of a career or career-conditional employee who was formerly employed in the competitive service and had competitive status or was serving probation when he/she was separated. Career conditional employees have three years following separation to be reinstated. Career employees have lifetime reinstatement rights.
22. Standard Form 50 (also called a "50") - Notification of Personnel Action. The SF-50 is completed by the personnel office, and is used to notify the employee, the payroll office, record the action in the employee's Official Personnel Folder and to provide a chronological file record of actions which have occurred.
23. Standard Form 52 (also called a "52") - Request for Personnel Action. Is used by operating officials or supervisors to request personnel actions and to secure internal agency clearance of requests for personnel action.
24. Form OF-612 - Application for Federal Employment. Also may use SF-171, Resume, Curriculum Vitae or other forms of Resume format.
25. Tenure Groups - Categories of employees ranked in priority order for retention during reduction-in-force.
26. Time-After-Competitive-Appointment Restriction - The provision that 3 months must elapse after an employee's latest non-temporary competitive appointment before he/she may be promoted or reassigned to a different line of work or to a different geographical area, transferred or reinstated to a higher grade or different line of work in the competitive service.
27. Time-In Grade Restriction - That part of the Civil Service regulations which prevents agencies from making excessively rapid promotions from one competitive service position that is subject to the General Schedule to another competitive service position that is subject to the General Schedule. As a general rule, an employee being promoted to a position above GS-5 must have served for one year in a grade at the next lower grade, or for one year at the second lower grade if the job is graded at two-grade intervals. (See 5 CFR, Part 300, Subpart F.)
28. Certificate of Eligibility (CERT) - A document of certified applicants for referral to a selecting official.

Position Category Codes

The Position Category Code appears as the first character of the position number on the PSP. (Official Position Category Codes and position numbers are assigned only the PD.) These codes are critical to position identification and information retrieval in a variety of administrative systems and for reporting purposes throughout ARS, to the Department and beyond. The codes and their definitions are:

- Code 1. Research Scientist (SY) positions are those positions (referred to as "Category 1") where the highest level of work, for a major portion of time, involves personal conduct and/or leadership of theoretical and experimental investigations primarily of a basic or applied nature. Category 1 positions that meet the Merit Pay Supervisory/Manager definitions will remain in this code. Examples: Laboratory Directors, Laboratory Chiefs, Research Leaders, and Supervisory Research Scientists (P&P 431.3).
- Code 2. Research Associate/Affiliate positions are professional scientists who perform all phases of research except problem selection. These positions are established for a maximum of two years at grades 11 or 12 levels, and are encumbered only by scientists who have gained their Ph.D.'s within 24 months prior to the proposed appointment date. Research Affiliates (GS- 7or 9) perform limited research projects on problems selected by Research Leaders in direct support of the mission of the unit where the position is established. Category 2 positions are classified via application of position classification standards rather than the Research Grade Evaluation Guide.
- Code 3. Support Scientist positions are professional scientific positions which function to provide direct support or service to one or more positions in Categories/Codes 1 or 4; are responsibly involved in one or more, but not all, phases of research (particularly not the problem selection and definition phases); and participate responsibly in the analysis and preliminary interpretation of data, but are not responsible for the final interpretation and conclusion which relate the results to the field of research involved (P&P 431.3).
- Code 4. Service Scientist (SY) positions serve as project or program leaders over, or personally perform, work assigned to ARS which involves professional scientific services to the public or to other Government agencies (P&P 431.3).
- Code 5. Technician/Aid/Assistant positions (Non-Engineering and Non-Scientific include all technicians, aids, and assistants in non-engineering and non-scientific single-interval occupational series (except those within the GS-300 group). Examples include: Safety Technician, Personnel Assistant, Accounting Technician, Purchasing Agent, Procurement Assistant, Library Technician, Supply Clerk, Personnel Clerk, Photographer, Guard, Firefighter, etc.

- Code 6. Specialist positions perform managerial, advisory, or administrative work based upon established principles which require training equivalent to that represented by college graduation and are typically in two-grade interval series. This code will encompass non-SY staff scientists and staff specialists. Examples include: Area Director, Center Director, Deputy Administrator, Agricultural Administrator, Safety Specialist, Personnel Officer, Personnel Staffing Specialist, Position Classification Specialist, Computer Specialist, Administrative Officer, Program Analyst, Accountant, Public Affairs Specialist, Technical Publications Writer, Facility Management Specialist, Budget Officer, Librarian, etc.
- Code 7. Technician/Aid/Assistant positions (Engineering and Scientific Support) includes technician, aid, and assistant positions in one-grade interval series within the GS-400, 600, 700, 800, 1300, and/or 1500 groups. Examples include: Biological Technician/Aid, Electronics Technician, Hydrologic Technician, Statistical Assistant/Clerk, Physical Science Technician/Aid.
- Code 8. Trade and Craft Occupations are positions having trade or craft knowledge as the paramount qualifications requirement. Examples: Boiler Plant Operator Foreman, Animal Caretaker Leader, Laborer, Farmer, Tractor Operator, etc.
- Code 9. Administrative Support Occupations (Clerical/Secretarial) are general occupations involved in structured work in support of office operations within one-grade interval series in the GS-300 occupational group. Examples: Clerk-Typist, Secretary, Clerk-Stenographer and Reporter, Computer Operator, Administrative Technician/Clerk, Management Assistant/Clerk, etc.
- Code 0 (zero) includes all positions that do not fit any of the above codes. Examples: Student Trainee (Biology); Student Trainee (Chemistry); Student Trainee (Accounting); Summer Aid positions (i.e., YV pay plan); Student Aid positions (i.e., YW, GW, and WW pay plans); Consultant and Expert positions; Collaborators; etc.
- Code G. Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) is used for employees serving a temporary assignment between ARS and States, local governments, institutions of higher education, Indian Tribal governments, or other organizations under Title IV of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (PL 91-648), as amended by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (PL 95-454).

THE HIRING PROCESS SUMMARIZED

A. COMPETITIVE Hiring Process

Applicants compete for vacant positions by qualifying under examination (either written or by an analysis of their previous education and work experience) and are selected from a Certificate of Eligibles or a Merit Promotion Certificate.

B. NONCOMPETITIVE Hiring Process

Applicants are appointed to vacant positions by meeting specific criteria established by law, executive order or Office of Personnel Management regulations and are exempt from competition by examination and selection from a Certificate. These positions are in the Excepted Service.

TYPES OF APPOINTMENTS

A. COMPETITIVE

- * Career Conditional - the tenure of a permanent employee who has not yet completed three years of creditable, substantially continuous Federal service
- * Career - the tenure of a permanent employee who has completed three years of creditable, substantially continuous Federal service.
- * Temporary - the tenure of a non-permanent employee who is hired to work for a specific period of time of one year or less.
- * Term - the tenure of a non-permanent employee who is hired to work on a project or assignment which is expected to last more than 1 year but not exceed 4 years.

B. NONCOMPETITIVE

- * Schedule A - positions other than those of a confidential or policy determining character for which it is not practical to examine (180 & 130 days appointments plus some authorities for hiring the handicapped)
- * Schedule B - positions for which competitive examinations are impractical but for which noncompetitive examinations are provided (Student Career Employment Program and Student Temporary Employment Program)

- * Schedule C - position of a confidential or policy determining character (political appointments)

ARS MERIT PROMOTION PLAN

The Merit Promotion Plan is a competitive process based on merit principles of identification, qualification, evaluation and selection of candidates without regard to political, religious, or labor organization affiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, age, national origin, or non-disqualifying disability. The competitive process is to be based solely on job-related criteria.

The competitive process is a systematic approach for employees to compete against one another for promotion based on their degree of the required knowledge, skills, and abilities for the higher level position.

The following actions must follow competitive procedures:

Temporary promotions

Lasting or expected to last more than 120 calendar days (all prior service including details to higher graded positions and temporary promotions in the preceding 12 months is counted regardless of whether such actions were competitive or noncompetitive).

Term promotions

Selections for details to a higher grade position or to a position with known promotion potential for more than 120 days.

Selection for training which is part of an authorized training agreement or is required before an employee can be considered for promotion.

Reassignment or demotion to a position with a higher grade potential than the position last held except when permitted by reduction-in-force regulations.

Transfer to a higher grade position

Reinstatement to a permanent or temporary position at a grade higher than the last grade held under a non-temporary appointment in the competitive service.

Positions that are recruited using Merit Promotion procedures are advertised on Vacancy Announcements with sufficient information and time for employees to apply. Generally, positions advertised locally should remain open for at least a week, positions advertised Area-wide should remain open at least 2 weeks, and those advertised Nationwide must remain open at least 3 weeks.

The minimum area of consideration is no less than ARS local commuting area, but if this does

not result in at least three best qualified candidates, the position can be re-announced using a broader area of consideration.

Relocation expenses will be authorized if the transfer of an employee is in the best interests of the Government. It is ARS policy that the transfer of an employee is deemed to be in the interest of the Government unless there is an affirmative decision that such action is primarily for the employee's convenience.

For more information about the Merit Promotion Plan, refer to P&P 420.1 and Manual 420.1.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE/AFFILIATES

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

- Two-year excepted service appointment
- Appointment within 3-4 years of Ph.D.
- GS-11 or GS-12 - RGEG applies (Category 2)
- May be appointed almost immediately
- No citizenship requirement, but must be a citizen of a country with which United States has defense agreements as provided in Appropriations Act or citizen of other excepted countries.

VISITING SCIENTIST

- Must have Ph.D.
- Funded locally
- Any professional GS-11 and above position (Category 1, 3, or 4)
- Category 1 - RGEG applies
- May be appointed almost immediately
- Usually senior scientists or technical experts in a particular field
- No citizenship requirement, but must be a citizen of a country with which United States has defense agreements as provided in Appropriations Act or citizen of other excepted countries.

*Note: Foreign visitors are not on our rolls. Reference Directive 121.2 If visiting for four or more months, forms ARS 214, 215, 216, 217, 218 and 219 are required.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSIONS BEYOND INITIAL APPOINTMENT

REQUESTS INCLUDE:

- Name of associate
- New extension date (i.e., 2, 4, 6 months, etc.)
- Brief description of associate's work and the importance of the work
- Reason for extension (i.e., delay in start-up, environmental delays; research took a different direction leading to a potentially valuable discovery not anticipated, requiring additional time; completion of a few remaining experiments to allow for completion of publications resulting from research effort; no other researcher available in the unit to learn the techniques required to complete remaining experiments; etc.)

REE-10 (9/98)

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Research, Education, and Economics Agencies

Employee Exit Checklist

| | | |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. EMPLOYEE | 2. ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT | 3. SEPARATION DATE |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|

INSTRUCTIONS: The administrative representative is responsible for ensuring that all items in Parts I - VI are checked. Any items marked as "no" under cleared should be identified in Part VII. The administrative representative must obtain authorization and signatures for all items listed in Part VII. Once the status of all items has been resolved, the administrative representative completes Part VIII and forwards this form to AFM, Human Resources Division.

| ITEM | ACTION | CLEARED | | | CLEARED THRU (Name/Office) | SIGNATURE | DATE |
|------|--------|---------|----|-----|-------------------------------|-----------|------|
| | | YES | NO | N/A | | | |

PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Leave Audit (AD-717) | Complete and forward to HRD. | | | | | | |
| 2. Lump-sum Payments (AD-581) | Complete and forward to HRD. | | | | | | |
| 3. Official Listings (phones & assorted directories) | Complete AD-349, AD-1024 | | | | | | |
| 4. Last T&A | Timekeeper must mark the last T&A as final. | | | | | | |
| 5. Retirement Forms (ARS field only) | Mailed SF-2802, SF-2808, SF-3106, SF-3201, TSP-BK01. | | | | | | |
| 6. Life Insurance Forms (ARS field only) | Mailed SF-2819 & SF-2821. | | | | | | |
| 7. Health Insurance Forms (ARS field only) | Mailed/delivered TCC Letter, RI 79-27, SF-2810. | | | | | | |
| 8. Unemployment Form (ARS field only) | Mailed/delivered SF-8. | | | | | | |
| 9. Performance Plan (NASS only) | Forward NASS PRP Form 435B to HRD. | | | | | | |
| 10. AD-1126, Exit Questionnaire | Collect and forward to HRD. | | | | | | |

PART II - IDENTIFICATION/PROPERTY

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1. USDA Photo ID Card | Collect and submit to AO/LAO or HRD in HQ. | | | | | | |
| 2. Lock-up Pass | Collect and destroy (ERS return to COS). | | | | | | |
| 3. Official Government Passport and/or Visa | Return to the originating office. | | | | | | |
| 4. Accountable Property (Computers, Cell phones, home use equipment, etc.) | All property has been returned. Contract warrants have been terminated. Passwords/IDs have been terminated. | | | | | | |
| 5. Other Accountable Items (keys, manuals, etc.) Transit Subsidy - ERS Only | All accountable items have been returned. | | | | | | |
| 6. Reference Materials (Smart Ctr., Library, etc.) | All reference materials have been returned. | | | | | | |
| 7. Personal Protection and Safety and Health (ARS only) | Locations - check with AO/LAO and Safety Officer to ensure compliance and clear equipment. | | | | | | |
| 8. Electronic Access Card(s) (Building, Elevator, Parking, etc.) | Collect and return to AFM/FD or AO/LAO for field offices. | | | | | | |

| ITEM | ACTION | CLEARED | | | CLEARED THRU (Name/Office) | SIGNATURE | DATE |
|---|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-----------|------|
| | | YES | NO | N/A | | | |
| Part III - FINANCIAL | | | | | | | |
| 1. Travel Advance | Check with designated preparer of travel advances (via NFC Travel) or with Imprest Fund | | | | | | |
| PART IV - SERVICE AGREEMENTS | | | | | | | |
| 1. First Duty Station/ Relocation Bonus | Verify that agreement has been fulfilled. | | | | | | |
| 2. Transfers/Relocations/ Bonus | Verify that agreement has been fulfilled. | | | | | | |
| 3. Long-Term Training (1890, Math Stat, etc.) | Verify that agreement has been fulfilled. | | | | | | |
| PART V - CHARGE CARDS | | | | | | | |
| 1. Travel Charge Card | Return to the employee's supervisor/administrative representative. | | | | | | |
| 2. PCMS Purchase Card | ARS & CSREES - return to AFM/FMD. NASS & ERS - return to agency budget office. ITD - Cancel Password and IDs | | | | | | |
| 3. Supply Cards (Central Supply Store - HQ) | Return to AFM/FD. | | | | | | |
| 4. FTS 2000/ International Calling Card | Return to AFM/ITD. | | | | | | |
| PART VI - SECURITY | | | | | | | |
| 1. Debriefing | Obtain signatures on AD-491. | | | | | | |
| 2. ADP access | ARS - Contact ACS/DCS or ITD help desk. CSREES, ERS, NASS - Contact LAN/e-mail administrator. | | | | | | |
| 3. NFC access | ARS/ ACS and CSREES - call ITD help desk; ERS - ADP Security Officer; NASS - Agency Security Officer. | | | | | | |
| 4. Classified Materials | Arrange with ITD to change safe and door combinations. | | | | | | |
| 5. Official Records | Supervisor must make sure records have not been removed. | | | | | | |
| 6. Office Doors, Files, Desk keys | Arrange with AFM/FD (AO/LAO for ARS field) to change locks, return keys, etc. | | | | | | |
| 7. Official Authorizations | Rescind employee's authorization to act for the agency (e.g. property passes, Imprest Fund, open travel authorizations, etc.) | | | | | | |
| PART VII - ITEMS NOT CLEARED (LIST SPECIFIC STATUS AND ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN) | | | | | | | |
| ITEM | STATUS | ACTION | | SIGNATURE OF AGENCY HEAD (OR DESIGNEE) | | | |
| 1. | | <input type="checkbox"/> Waive | <input type="checkbox"/> Collect | | | | |
| 2. | | <input type="checkbox"/> Waive | <input type="checkbox"/> Collect | | | | |
| PART VIII - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE REPRESENTATIVE ONCE ALL ITEMS HAVE BEEN CHECKED. | | | | | | | |
| Signature: _____ | | | | Date: _____ | | | |

Performance Evaluations, IDP's and Awards

(for detailed information, see USDA Guide for Employee Recognition)



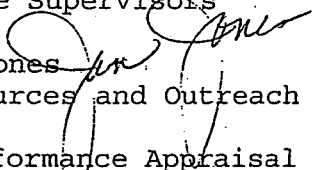
United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

January 2, 2001

SUBJECT: Performance Appraisal Forms
Performance Cycle Ending 12/31/2000

TO: Location Administrative Officers
Fort Collins Research Leaders
Area Office Supervisors

FROM: Janet L. Jones 
Human Resources and Outreach Coordinator

Enclosed are the Performance Appraisal Forms, AD-435's, for all two grade interval employees at your location whose appraisal period ends December 31, 2000. If a preprinted AD-435 is not included for any of these employees, you should prepare one. To be rated at this time, employees must have been in their current position and under standards for a minimum of 90 days.

A copy of a *Checklist for Completion of AD-435* (Attachment 1) and *Checklist for Preparing Performance Plans* (Attachment 2) are enclosed. Please make copies locally and distribute to supervisors with the forms. Please remind supervisors that appraisals should *NOT* be discussed with the employee until after the Reviewing Official has signed the AD-435. Completed appraisals are due in my office by March 16, 2001.

Once all signatures have been obtained, the employee and supervisor may retain their copies. Each completed appraisal package should be forwarded to my office in the following order:

- 1) Original NFC Processing Copy of the AD-435P.
- 2) Official Personnel Folder/Employee Performance File Copy of AD-435P
- 3) Written justification for Outstanding and Unacceptable rating, if applicable
- 4) Original Performance Plan and standards

Since most supervisors will be conducting appraisals at this time, now would be a good time to conduct progress reviews for employees who are on the first appraisal cycle (April 1 - March 31). Progress reviews should be documented on the cover sheet of the performance plan. If you have questions, you may call Paula Bovee at (970) 229-5503.



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An Equal Opportunity Employer

CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETION OF AD-435

The Summary Rating (item 16A) is a consideration factor for within grade increases, promotions, retention, etc. Careful attention to the items listed below will ensure the accuracy of records maintained by the Human Resources Division (HRD) and by National Finance Center (NFC).

SUPERVISOR:

1. Use numerals (not X's) when scoring elements.
(Critical Elements = 2; Noncritical elements = 1)
2. There must be at least 3 elements entered in Item 14; at least 1 element must be critical and at least 1 element must be noncritical.
3. Double check addition.
4. Use Decision Table (Item 16B) to determine Summary Rating.
5. A Summary Rating of Outstanding requires a written justification.
6. Make sure the correct block is checked on the carbon copies. Copies frequently slip, resulting in the wrong block being checked on the carbon copies.
7. Do not discuss the rating with the employee until after the Reviewing Official has approved and signed the rating form.
8. Completed appraisal and award packages should be sent to the Area Office, Personnel Department, C/O Jan Jones or Paula Bovee.

EMPLOYEE:

1. Recheck Item 1, SON; it must be accurate.
2. Be sure Item 17 is answered. (*Mark N/A if not appropriate*)

DOCUMENTATION

After the rating supervisor, reviewing official, and the employee have signed the AD-435P, retain the supervisory and employee copies and send the following to the Area Office, Personnel Department, C/O Jan Jones:

- 1) Original NFC Processing copy of AD-435P
- 2) Official Personnel Folder/Employee Performance File copy of AD-435p
- 3) Written justification for Outstanding and Unacceptable rating, if applicable
- 4) Original Performance Plan and cover sheet

DUE DATES

All documentation should be received in the Area Office no later than **March 16, 2001**. Please send the appraisals as they are completed; you do not need to wait for the entire location.

UNRATABLE EMPLOYEES

If you receive an AD-435P for an employee who is no longer with the Agency or who cannot be rated for any other reason, please return the appraisal form to Jan Jones with a note explaining the circumstances. If an employee is unratable due to length of service (i.e., the employee has not been on board the minimum of 90 days), the appraisal period can usually be extended so that the employee can be rated.

AWARDS:

Employees rated Superior or above are eligible for performance bonus awards.

Recommendation and Approval of Awards (Form AD-287-2) with a copy of the performance Appraisal must be submitted for each award nomination. For awards of \$500 or less, no written justification is necessary. Awards that exceed \$500 must be accompanied by a written justification.

WE SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING CITATION:

"This award is based upon an official performance appraisal rating of (Superior or Outstanding) for the rating period (show dates of appraisal period)."

If the summary rating for the employee is Outstanding, the justification provided for that rating will be sufficient for this purpose; if the summary rating is less than Outstanding, you will have to prepare a separate justification statement. Quality Step Increases (QSI's) are considered Performance Awards and may be recommended only for those employees who have received an Outstanding rating. The justification provided for the rating will be sufficient documentation for the QSI.

Since performance awards are based upon the annual performance rating, an employee may not be recommended for more than one award in this category. This does not preclude recommendation for other monetary or nonmonetary award categories (such as Extra Effort, Spot, Time Off, etc.) during this time period.

CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING PERFORMANCE PLANS

Performance plans should be developed for each employee within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period.

The following are some reminders for establishing a performance plan.

1. Check the employee's position description for accuracy; the major duties in the position description should be included in the performance plan as critical elements. Accomplishment of organizational objectives and goals can be included in Performance Plans.
2. Employee participation in developing the plan is desirable. However, the rating and reviewing officials have the final responsibility for establishing the performance plan.
3. There must be at least three, but not more than ten elements.
4. At least one element must be critical; at least one element must be noncritical.
5. Standards should be as objective as possible.
6. Each employee whose position is classified as a "supervisor" must have performance elements(s) that address supervisory responsibility and a separate element that addresses EO/CR. (Positions classified as supervisor usually include, the term Supervisory, Supervisor, Manager, Officer, or Administrator in the title.)
7. All nonsupervisory employees' performance plans must include (in at least one of the critical elements) the responsibility for demonstrating a commitment to EO/CR. Remember, nonsupervisory employees also include those individuals who have limited supervisory responsibilities (such as, supervision of one technician or student, team leaders, etc.).
8. All employees with health, safety, environmental protection, and/or energy management responsibilities should have an element and standard in their performance plan that addresses these responsibilities.
9. The performance plan must be signed by the employee, the supervisor, and the reviewing supervisor (normally, the second-line supervisor). The employee should then receive a copy of the approved plan.

Reminder

There must be at least one documented progress review during the appraisal period. The documentation can be a note on the Performance Plan that the discussion took place and the date of the discussion.

Copies of the new performance plan do not need to be sent to the Area Personnel Office. The originals are to be maintained by the supervisor.

NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATIONS

Appraisals: A written narrative providing details concerning the employee's performance is required if: 1) any one element is rated "Does Not Meet;" or, 2) all elements are rated "Exceeds." (The latter case would, of course result in an "Outstanding" rating.) This information may be recorded on the Performance Appraisal Worksheets (Forms AD-435A and 435B), if available, or by a separate memo.

Awards: Employees rated Superior or above are eligible for performance bonus awards. A Recommendation and Approval of Awards (Form AD-287-2) **with a copy of the Performance Appraisal forms package (AD-435A, B, and P) enclosed**, must be submitted for each award nomination.

- For awards of \$500 or less, no written justification is necessary. We suggest the following citation:

 "This award is based upon an official performance appraisal rating of (*Superior* or *Outstanding*) for the rating period September 1, 1997 through August 31, 1998."
- Awards that exceed \$500 must be accompanied by a written justification. If the summary rating for the employee is *Outstanding*, the justification provided for that rating will be sufficient for this purpose; if the summary rating is less than *Outstanding*, you will have to prepare a separate justification statement.
- Quality Step Increases (QSI's) are considered Performance Awards and may be recommended only for those employees who have received an *Outstanding* rating. The justification provided for the rating will be sufficient documentation for the QSI.

Since Performance Awards are based upon the annual performance rating, an employee may not be recommended for more than one award in this category. This does not preclude a recommendation for other monetary or nonmonetary award categories (such as Extra Effort, Spot, Time Off etc.) during this time period.

UNRATABLE EMPLOYEES

If you receive an AD-435P for an employee who is no longer with the Agency or who cannot be rated for any other reason, please return the appraisal form with a note explaining the circumstances. If an employee is unratable due to length of service (i.e., the employee has not been on board the minimum of 90 days), the appraisal period can usually be extended so that the employee can be rated.

**United States Department of Agriculture
Performance Appraisal**

| | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1 Social Security No. | | 2 Position Number | 3 Pay Plan | 4 Occup. Series |
| 5 Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) | | 6 Grade/Step or Pay Level | 7 Appraisal Period From _____ To _____ | |
| 8 Official Position Title | | 9 Organization Structure Code | | |
| 10 Duty Station | 11 Funding Unit | 12 Agency Use | 13 NFC Use | |
| <p>Instructions</p> <p>Blocks 1 through 10, completed by NFC, should be reviewed and, if necessary, corrected.</p> <p>Block 11. Enter funding unit number.</p> <p>Block 14. Enter brief description of performance elements.</p> <p>Block 15A. Check performance elements identified as critical.</p> <p>Blocks 15B, 15C, 15D. Rate actual performance by entering 2 for critical elements and 1 for non-critical elements in appropriate column.</p> <p>Blocks 15E, 15F, 15G. Enter total of each column.</p> <p>Block 15H. Enter total from 15E, 15F, and 15G.</p> <p>Block 16A. Check off the correct summary rating described in decision table (16B).</p> <p>Blocks 17 through 22. Self-explanatory.</p> | | | | |
| 14 Performance Elements | | 15A Critical Element (✓) | 15B Exceeds Fully Successful | 15C Meets Fully Successful |
| 1) | | | | |
| 2) | | | | |
| 3) | | | | |
| 4) | | | | |
| 5) | | | | |
| 6) | | | | |
| 7) | | | | |
| 8) | | | | |
| 9) | | | | |
| 10) | | | | |
| 16B Decision Table (check off Summary Rating in block 16A) Rating of Outstanding if 15E equals 15H. Rating of Unacceptable if any critical element is rated in 15D. Rating of Superior if no element is rated in 15D; 15F is greater than zero; and 15E is greater than 15F. Rating of Marginal if 15G is greater than 15E, and no critical element is rated in 15D. Rating of Fully Successful if none of the above apply. | | | 15E Exceeds 15F Meets 15G Does Not Meet | 15H Enter total 15E + 15F + 15G = 15H |
| 17 Employee - Standards of Conduct and Ethical Responsibilities (Check off appropriate boxes) a. I have a copy of the Governmentwide standards of ethical conduct and any USDA and agency supplemental regulations governing conduct. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO b. I attended the required annual ethics training. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO | | | 16A Summary Rating (See Decision Table in 16B) <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding <input type="checkbox"/> Superior <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Marginal <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable | |
| 18 Employee's signature _____ Date _____ If employee did not sign, state reason. (Instructions for resolutions of disputes are on the reverse of employee copy.) | | | | |
| 19 Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____ | | 20 Reviewer's Signature _____ Date _____ | | |
| 21 Approving Official's or Funding Unit Manager's Signature (optional) _____ Date _____ | | | | |

Original--NFC Processing Copy

Form AD-435P (3/93)

(Revised 10/2000)

10-26

SAMPLE COVERSHEET

PERFORMANCE PLAN

FOR

(POSITION TITLE, PAY PLAN, SERIES & GRADE)

(ORGANIZATION/LOCATION)

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____

RATING PERIOD: _____

THE ATTACHED PERFORMANCE PLAN HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE RATER (SUPERVISOR) AND REVIEWER AND WAS DISCUSSED WITH AND A COPY GIVEN TO THE EMPLOYEE.

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

RATING OFFICIAL'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

REVIEWING OFFICIAL'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

PROGRESS REVIEW(S):

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Rating Official's Initials | _____/_____ date | _____/_____ date |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Employee Initials | _____/_____ date | _____/_____ date |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|

SAMPLE - ELEMENT AND STANDARD

ELEMENT 1

CRITICAL ___YES ___NO

PLANS RESEARCH

FULLY SUCCESSFUL LEVEL

Annual research plans are developed in accordance with supervisor's specified format (necessary components elements, requirements for peer review, etc); submitted in accordance with timeframe established by supervisor and requiring only minor changes for supervisory approval (approved by supervisor within two to five days of his/her initial review).

SPECIFIC PERSONAL GOALS FOR RATING PERIOD:

___DOES NOT MEET ___FULLY SUCCESSFUL ___EXCEEDS

NOTE: ELEMENTS MAY BE PLACED 1, 2, OR 3 TO A PAGE DEPENDING ON LENGTH OF ELEMENT.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| NOTE: See instructions on reverse. | | 4. DESCRIPTION OF WORK ASSIGNMENTS | |
| 1. EMPLOYEE'S NAME (Last, first, initial) | | A. Current Performance Elements Identified for Development/Training | |
| 2. CURRENT POSITION TITLE | | | |
| 3. ORGANIZATION NAME AND LOCATION | | B. Projected/Potential Assignments | |
| 5. Performance Related Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities | | 6. Developmental Work Experiences (On-the-job assignments, Self development) | 7. Formal Training (Courses, Seminars) |
| | | | |
| The supervisor and employee have completed the IDP process and have determined that no training or developmental needs are indicated at this time. | | 9. SIGNATURE and DATE | |
| EMPLOYEE | | SUPERVISOR | APPROVING OFFICIAL |

May 8, 1998

Subject: Performance and Awards Update #98-1

From: Linda Nicholson
Team Leader, Performance and Awards Section
Policy Branch

We have received a number of questions regarding performance appraisals and awards that we thought would be useful to others (along with the answers, of course).

1. Question: Who is responsible for conducting a performance appraisal for an employee who is on detail or a temporary promotion?

Answer: The supervisor of record. In accordance with ARS Directive 418.3, a performance plan should be established (prepared, signed, and dated by the employee *and* the rating/reviewing officials) for any employee who is detailed or temporarily promoted for 120 days or more. The *detail* supervisor is responsible for establishing the performance plan and preparing a summary (or advisory) rating. The supervisor of record must "consider" the summary rating when preparing the annual performance rating of record. Although the current trend leans toward extended details, supervisor of record is still responsible for preparing the rating.

2. Question: Are supervisors required to conduct a performance appraisal for students?

Answer: Employees appointed under the SCEP are covered under performance appraisal regulations. Employees appointed under the STEP are *not* covered under performance appraisal regulations, if they are expected to work less than 120 consecutive days in a calendar year for the same supervisor under an appointment limited to 1 year or less. HOWEVER, they are covered by performance regulations if they work more than one year. So, if you appoint someone and subsequently extend the appointment beyond a year, you are required to appraise that individual.

It would probably be a good idea to set up generic standards for your students so that they will have them if they are needed. Also, we encourage supervisors to maintain records of work on students in case they are called for a reference or need to recommend or take any other type of administrative action involving these employees.

Due to the nature of L/A appointments (i.e., appointments do not exceed either 130 or 180 workdays), L/A appointments are not covered by performance appraisal regulations.

NOTE: The current performance directive is dated 5/21/92. It lists exceptions to the requirement for performance appraisals (pages 8 and 9). However, the new student authorities we use did not exist in 1992, so the directive does not specifically address this issue. Final regulations for the new student employment programs were issued in December 1994. Basically, all of our old appointing authorities for Co-ops, Stay-in-School, 1040s, etc. were included in the Student Educational Employment Program (either Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) or the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)).

3. Question: Is Directive 468.7 still in effect? I know we have the USDA Guide for Employee Recognition (the *Blue Book*), but aren't the awards directives still in place?

Answer: No. When the *Blue Book* was originally issued, the transmittal stated, "Effective upon receipt of the "Guide for Employee Recognition," the following ARS Directives/Circulars are canceled:

486.6 ARS Performance Management and Recognition System

463.5 Disputes Resolution on Performance Appraisals for Performance Management Recognition System Employees

468.7 Incentive Awards Program

468.8 Agriculture Suggestion Awards Program

468.9 Spot Awards Program

92-3 Time Off Awards (Circular)

Our guidance for awards is contained in the *Blue Book* and 5 GFR mixed with a major portion of logic and common sense.

4. Question: Must performance awards be submitted within 90 days of the performance appraisal?

Answer: Generally, yes. The regulations require that performance awards must be effected as soon as practical at the close of the appraisal cycle. Many times performance

appraisals are not completed for 60-90 days after the end of the rating cycle, and we may not receive a performance action to process for 60 days beyond that date. Performance awards processed later than 60 days after receipt of an annual performance rating of record should be rare. Delaying a performance award that is intended to recognize the past 12-months' exemplary performance deflates the effect of the award. Additionally, delaying a quality step increase (QSI) could have an impact on an employee's eligibility for future QSIs or other salary adjustments.

Performance awards include both lump sum cash awards and QSI. (A QSI is the equivalent of an extra within-grade-increase [WGI].) Performance awards must be based on the current annual performance rating of record; therefore, only one QSI may be granted per rating of record. A QSI must be based on an Outstanding rating; an employee may only be granted one QSI within a 52-week period. A lump sum cash award may be given to any employee who receives a Fully Successful or higher rating.

5. Question: Can an employee receive more than one performance award?

Answer: No. A performance award (which may be either lump sum or a QSI) is based on the annual performance rating – which is (normally) only given once a year. However, other award types may be given at any time; i.e., time-off, spots, extra effort, etc.

6. Question: What if an employee refuses to sign the rating?

Answer: The rating is still valid. The employee's signature only indicates receipt of the rating – not concurrence. The supervisor should note on the appraisal that discussion was held on (specify date); employee chose not to sign.

7. Question: Can local policy be established that outlines eligibility for performance awards?

Answer: The regulations do not prohibit policy to be established at the local level (nor does the agency). *However, if your location includes any bargaining unit employees, you must negotiate these issues.* In order for recognition to be effective, it should be granted to deserving individuals who set an example for others to follow. Employees should be recognized as soon as possible after the eligible event occurred. Specific examples include:

- *Situation:* Location X would like to establish a policy whereby there is a mandatory requirement for granting a performance award to anyone who has received an Outstanding rating.

Response: This is acceptable. Location X does not preclude performance awards for other than Outstanding employees, but wants to ensure

recognition for their "leaders."

- *Situation:* Location Y decides that they will not grant anyone a performance award who has less than an Outstanding rating.

Response: This does not preclude them from granting other types of awards; i.e., special acts, time off, spot awards, etc. This is acceptable. Employee complaints usually only occur whenever there are exceptions to this process.

- *Situation:* Location Z only grants performance awards to employees with Superior ratings IF they have held that rating for 3 consecutive years.

Response: Location Z appears to be recognizing employees on a 3-year-cycle. While this practice may not be specifically precluded by law or regulation, it bears some caution. A performance award must be directly tied to the current performance rating. An employee who has consecutive Superior ratings could presume that some years performance warranted an award and some years the same level of performance did not warrant an award. Also, as employees are being relocated, reassigned, promoted from one position and/or location to another, the information could be difficult to accurately and fairly track.

It is the policy of the Department to ensure that consideration for awards is made without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability or other nonmerit factors.

| U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | | CASE NO. (Personnel Use Only) |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| RECOMMENDATION & APPROVAL OF AWARDS | | |
| NOTE: For group awards, attach list of group members. Show data in Items 2 - 9, and award amount for each payee. | | |
| 1. AGENCY | 2. NAME OF EMPLOYEE (Last, first, middle initial) | |
| 3. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. | 4. POSITION TITLE | 5. PAY PLAN- SERIES / GRADE / STEP |
| 6. ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION | 7. PERIOD COVERED FOR AWARD (mm, dd, yy) From: To: (ADDRESS) | 8. ACCOUNTING CODE |
| 9. IF AWARD APPROVED, MAIL CHECK TO: <input type="checkbox"/> SALARY CHECK ADDRESS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify address): ➔ | | |
| 10. LIST AWARDS OR QSI'S IN THE PAST 52 WEEKS (Specify type of award, amount received, and effective date.) | | |
| 11. CITATION: SUMMARIZE EMPLOYEE'S CONTRIBUTION IN 25 WORDS OR LESS. (This language will appear on the employee's certificate.) EMPLOYEE IS BEING RECOGNIZED FOR: | | |

| COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE AWARD SECTION | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| EXTRA EFFORT AWARD | 12. TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION OR INVENTION * <input type="checkbox"/> EXTRA EFFORT AWARD * <input type="checkbox"/> SPOT AWARD <input type="checkbox"/> TIME OFF AWARD ** <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER * <input type="checkbox"/> KEEPSAKE AWARD <input type="checkbox"/> GAINSHARING AWARD * Attach a description of the contribution or patent notification being recognized and the resulting benefits to the Government. ** Attach a description if the contribution exceeds the moderate benefits. | | | | |
| | 13. NO. OF PERSONS | 14. TOTAL AWARD (Give dollar amount / hours, or value of item) | 15. TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT / HOURS BASED ON: (Check appropri- box) ➔ | <input type="checkbox"/> MEASURABLE BENEFITS SCALE <input type="checkbox"/> NONMEASURABLE BENEFITS SCALE | ESTIMATED FIRST YEAR SAVINGS \$ VALUE OF BENEFITS APPLICATION |
| | 16. TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD * <input type="checkbox"/> QUALITY STEP INCREASE * Certification: I certify, by my signature in the Recommendation & Approval section below, that the employee's position description and the performance standards for the position were thoroughly reviewed prior to submission of this recommendation; that the employee's performance is outstanding; and that the performance is characteristic and is expected to continue in the future. * Attach a copy of employee's latest performance rating of record. Also, attach a justification statement, if required. | | | | |
| | 17. DATE OF LAST PROMOTION | 18. DATE OF LAST WITHIN GRADE INCREASE | 19. AMOUNT RECOMMENDED FOR PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD \$ | | |
| RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL | | | | | |
| 20. RECOMMENDING INDIVIDUAL (Signature) | | DATE | 21. REVIEWING OFFICIAL (Signature) | | DATE |
| TITLE: | | TITLE: | | | |
| 22. APPROVING OFFICIAL (Signature & Title) | | | | | DATE |
| PERSONNEL USE ONLY | | | | | |
| 23. AGENCY CODE / POI | 24. DATE EFFECTIVE | QUALITY STEP INCREASE: ➔ | 25. TO: (Grade & Step) | 26. NEW SALARY | 27. RATE |
| I certify that the proposed action is in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements | | | 29. PERSONNEL OFFICIAL (Signature & Title) | | DATE PROCESSED |
| | | | | | |

Suggestions

GUIDELINES FOR SUGGESTIONS

Any idea that provides a savings or results in more efficient operations will be accepted as a suggestion.

Suggestions that cannot normally be considered for awards include ideas that deal with employees' services, benefits, working conditions, housekeeping, routine safety practices, or maintenance of buildings and grounds. However, if these ideas result in benefits to the U.S. Government, they may be accepted as suggestions and are appropriate in granting awards.

Employees who have questions regarding their suggestions, should contact their supervisor. If the supervisor cannot answer the questions, they should be referred to the next higher level.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to:

- a. Keep employees informed about how to submit suggestions.
- b. Encourage individual employees, and help them develop and prepare suggestions.
- c. Check suggestions to assure that they contain enough facts or information to clearly explain the suggestions and support their benefits.
- d. Evaluate suggestions within 15 calendar days, and decide whether it can be adopted.
- e. If authority to adopt is not within his/her authority, forward through appropriate channels with comments.

A suggestion award is appropriate when the suggestion is related to the employee's job, but outside his/her responsibilities or authority to implement, or when the suggestion is within the employee's job responsibilities, but is so superior that it warrants special recognition.

When adoption of suggestion is within approving authority, the supervisor will calculate savings based on chart on page 11 or 12 of USDA Guide for Employee Recognition.

PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING AD-287, EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION FORM

CONSULT GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM.

Employee must complete AD-287 as follows:

A brief summary of suggestion.

A detailed explanation of suggestion.

Signature, Position Title, Grade, and Date Submitted.

Suggestion Number - To be completed in Personnel.

Employee then forwards the AD-287 to his/her immediate supervisor.

Supervisor must complete AD-287 as follows:

Signature (Received by) and date.

On reverse side of AD-287, supervisor must:

Indicate if (a) you have put into effect, (b) you recommend, but lack authority to adopt, or (c) you do not recommend, stating reasons. Also provide best estimate possible of annual dollar savings and intangible benefits. Report results of any tests made of the suggestion. Date and initial comments and recommendations set forth below.

After signing and commenting in Block, 1, supervisor sends the suggestion form to LAO/Area Personnel Office for routing to reviewing officials.

Selected reviewing officials must sign and comment in writing on suggestion, either recommending or not recommending adoption with an explanation.

If suggestion is approved, a form AD-287-2, Recommendation & Approval of Cash Award, must be completed by the appropriate Research Unit Secretary. Submit the completed AD-287 and the AD-287-2, to the Personnel Office for processing.

If the suggestion is not approved, an official letter is done by the LAO/Area Personnel Office. An ARS mug and ink pen will also be given to the employee at this time.

Training

TRAINING SF-182

The SF-182, Training Form, must be prepared for ALL instances of training; e.g., workshops, correspondence courses, programmed instructions, individual college study, traditional classroom courses, etc. This includes short courses and videos of 1-4 hours (or less than a day). Remember, however, "abbreviated" SF-182s can be done in these instances where no funds are expended or groups of employees attend. If training is being paid via Imprest Fund, Purchase Order, or contract, an SF-182 must be prepared.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING A SF-182

- A. AF-03-4860 code must be entered on all SF-182s.
- B. Obtain Document Control Number from the LAO or the Hqs Training Designee.
- C. Check appropriate box.
 1. Enter trainee's full name; enter first five digits of last name in shaded area.
 2. Enter trainee's social security number (nine digits).
 3. Complete ONLY for Graduate School, USDA (formerly OPM) courses. Enter trainee's year/month of birth, e.g., 43/01.
 4. Complete ONLY for Graduate School, USDA courses. Enter trainee's home address.
 5. Complete ONLY for Graduate School, USDA courses. Enter trainee's home telephone number, including area code.
 - 6-7. Self explanatory.
 8. Enter commercial telephone number.
 - 9-10. Complete ONLY in case of long-term training (e.g., full-time training of 120 days or more).
 - 11a. Trainee's position title/function.
 - 11b. If the applicant is disabled or handicapped and in need of special arrangements (braille, taping, interpreters, facility accessibility, etc.), mark block with X and describe the special arrangements on a separate sheet and attach to the Vendor copy.

NOTE: The applicant is not required to furnish this information. Their signature on the

description sheet indicates agreement to release it to the training vendors.

12. Trainee's pay plan, job series and present grade, i.e., GS-201-12/3.
13. Complete ONLY for Graduate School, USDA courses. Use the following symbols to show type of appointment.

C = Career T = Temporary Term = Term EP = Excepted permanent

14. Complete ONLY for long-term training programs (over 120 days). Enter the highest degree attained.
- 15a. Training vendor's name and mailing address.
- 15b. Site of training, if same, place X in the box.
16. Self explanatory.
17. Enter catalog/course number, if provided by vendor.
18. Enter the year, month, and day the course begins and ends.
19. Self-explanatory. (If the training is over 80 hours for a single program (during duty or non-duty) and is conducted by a non-Federal Government vendor, and official funds will be expended, the employee must read and sign the reverse side of Copy 1 or the SF-182.)
20. Use training code definitions. (Attached)
21. Enter OCC 2523 directly across from and on the same line as "direct costs and appropriation/fund chargeable."

Enter the current fiscal year's 10- or 14-digit financial data code from which the training costs will be paid in the appropriate/fund column.

a,b,c Enter four-digit dollar amount as appropriate for each item and leave Cents column blank or enter "00."

d. Enter four-digit total dollar amount and leave cents column blank for enter "00."
22. As appropriate, enter rounded-off dollar amounts for travel and per diem. Leave cents column blank or enter "00." Leave appropriation/fund column blank.
23. Enter dollar amount to be obligated by this training request in parenthesis on right side of this block, e.g., (\$0325). This amount should be the same as the amount shown in Block 2ld.

24. For Government sponsored courses only, i.e., OP, Graduate School, USDA, GPO, enter NFC's eight-digit station symbol 12-40-0001.

25. If vendor is a Government Agency such as Graduate School, USDA, OP, GPO, etc., place the following in Block 25.

USDA-NFC-FSD-ARB
Reporting Section No.4
P.O. Box 53326 TANO Bldg.
New Orleans, LA 70153

If commercial or non-Government Vendor, such as AMA, USDA, Graduate School, etc., place the following in Block 25:

USDA-NFC-FSD-ARB
Reporting Section No.4
P.O. Box 53326 TANO Bldg.
New Orleans, LA 70153

NOTE: If training is paid by purchase card or government check, leave Block 25 blank.

26-27. Type name, title and commercial telephone number of appropriate officials.

28a. Type name, title and commercial telephone number of LAO or Hqs Training Designee.

29. Type name, title and commercial telephone number of authorizing official* – for Hqs Division/ Staff Director or Administrative Officer for Field - Research Leader.

30. Type name, title and commercial telephone number of LAO or Hqs Training Designee.

*RLs can authorize:

- Non-federal government training not in excess of \$1,500.
- University training not in excess of \$1,500 (includes tuition, books/materials, travel, per diem, miscellaneous fees, etc.) and not to exceed 120 hours (credit hours) in a single program per person per semester/term.
- All Federal Government training except Executive Development Programs.

Reference: P&P 440-1.

Training Codes/Purpose – Block 20a

- 1 As a result of mission or program changes
- 2 As a result of new technology
- 3 As a result of new work assignment
- 4 To improve present performance
- 5 To meet future staff needs
- 6 To develop unavailable skills
- 7 Trade or craft apprenticeship
- 8 Orientation
- 9 Adult basic education

Training Codes/Type – Block 20b

- 1 Executive and management
- 2 Supervisory
- 3 Legal, medical, scientific or engineering
- 4 Administrative and analysis
- 5 Speciality and technical
- 6 Clerical
- 7 Trade and craft
- 8 Orientation
- 9 Adult basic education

Training Codes/Source – Block 20c

- 1 Government-Agency
- 2 Government-Interagency
- 3 Non-government - designed for Agency
- 4 Non-government - off shelf
- 5 State or local government

Training Codes – Block 20d

- 00 None
- 01 Executive development
- 02 Supervision
- 03 Supervisory/Manager probationary period
- 04 Upward mobility (Department)
- 05 Upward mobility (Agency)
- 06 SES candidate development program
- 07 Management development program (Department)
- 08 Management development program (Agency)
- 09 FSC Midlevel
- 10 FSC Senior threshold
- 11 PMI

- 12 COOP
- 13 Presidents Executive Exchange Program
- 14 LEGIS
- 15 Com sci
- 16 Woman's career and/or executive development
- 17 PTO law program
- 18 Long-term full-time
- 19 Long-term part-time
- 20 EEO training
- 21 Computer training
- 22 Self development
- 23 Congressional fellowship
- 24 Foreign language training
- 25 Total Quality Management
- 26 Procurement Integrity Act Ethics Training
- 27 InfoShare Training
- 28 HIV/AIDS Training

| REQUEST, AUTHORIZATION, AGREEMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF TRAINING | | | | A. Agency code, agency subelement and submitting office number (Example - 10-100-1000) | | 01 B. OFFICE USE ONLY | |
|---|--|---|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | C. Request status (Mark (X) one) | |
| | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Initial or Resubmission <input type="checkbox"/> Correction or Cancellation | |
| Section A TRAINEE INFORMATION | | | | | | | |
| 1. Applicant's name (Last - First - Middle Initial) | | | Enter first 5 letters of last name | | 03 2. Social Security Number | | 04 3. Date of birth (Year and month) |
| 4. Home address (Number, street, city, State, ZIP code) | | | 5. Home telephone | | 6. Position level (Mark (X) one only) | | |
| | | | Area code Number | | <input type="checkbox"/> a. Non-supervisory <input type="checkbox"/> c. Manager <input type="checkbox"/> b. Supervisory <input type="checkbox"/> d. Executive | | |
| 7. Organization mailing address (Branch - Division / Office / Bureau / Agency) | | | 8. Office telephone | | 9. Continuous civilian service | | |
| | | | Area code Number Extension | | Years Months <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Number of prior non-government training days | | |
| 11a. Position title / function | | 11b. Applicant handicapped or disabled (See instructions) | | 12. Pay plan / series / grade / step | | 13. Type of appointment | |
| | | | | | | 14. Education Level | |
| Section B TRAINING COURSE DATA | | | | | | | |
| 15a. Name and mailing address of training vendor (No., street, city, State, ZIP code) | | | | 15b. Location of training site (If same, mark box) <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| 16. Course title and training objectives (Benefits to be derived by the Government) | | | | | | | |
| 17. Catalog / Course No. | | 18. Training period (6 digits) | | 06 19. No. of course hours (4 digits) | | 07 20. Training codes (See instructions) | |
| | | Year Month Day | | a. During duty | | Code | |
| a. Start | | | | b. Non-duty | | a. Purpose | |
| b. Complete | | | | c. TOTAL | | b. Type | |
| | | | | | | 08 c. Source | |
| | | | | | | 09 d. Special interest | |
| | | | | | | 10 | |
| | | | | | | 11 | |
| Section C ESTIMATED COSTS AND BILLING INFORMATION | | | | | | | |
| 21. Direct costs and appropriation / fund chargeable | | | | | | | |
| Item | | Amount | | Appropriation / fund | | | |
| | | Dollars Cents | | | | | |
| a. Tuition | | | | | | | |
| b. Books or Materials | | | | | | | |
| c. Other (Specify) | | | | | | | |
| d. (Enter 4 digits in dollar column) | | 12 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | |
| 22. Indirect costs and appropriation / fund chargeable | | | | | | | |
| Item | | Amount | | Appropriation / fund | | | |
| | | Dollars Cents | | | | | |
| a. Travel | | | | | | | |
| b. Per diem | | | | | | | |
| c. Other (Specify) | | | | | | | |
| d. (Enter 4 digits in dollar column) | | 13 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | |
| 23. Document / Purchase Order / Requisition No. | | | | | | | |
| 24. 8-Digit station symbol (Example - 12-34-5678) | | | | | | | |
| 25. BILLING INSTRUCTIONS (Furnish invoice to): | | | | | | | |
| Section D APPROVALS | | | | | | | |
| 26a. Immediate supervisor Name and title | | | | Area code / Tel. No. / Extension | | | |
| b. Signature | | | | Date | | | |
| 27a. Second line supervisor Name and title | | | | Area code / Tel. No. / Extension | | | |
| b. Signature | | | | Date | | | |
| 28a. Training officer Name and title | | | | Area code / Tel. No. / Extension | | | |
| b. Signature | | | | Date | | | |
| Section E APPROVAL/CONCURRENCE | | | | | | | |
| 29a. Authorizing official Name and title | | | | Area code / Tel. No. / Extension | | | |
| b. Signature | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved Date | | | |
| Section F CERTIFICATION OF TRAINING COMPLETION | | | | | | | |
| 30a. Certifying official Name and title | | | | Area code / Tel. No. / Extension | | | |
| b. Signature | | | | Date | | | |
| TRAINING FACILITY Bill should be sent to office indicated in item 25. Please refer to number given in item 23 to assure prompt payment. | | | | | | | |

This form was electronically produced by USDA/ARS/ITD using INFORMS software.

Standard Form 182 (Rev. 12/79) (10-Part)
U.S. Office of Personnel Management, FPMR Chapter 410

NOTE: This agreement must be signed by the nominee for all **non-government** training that exceeds 80 hours (or such other designated period, 80 hours or less, as prescribed by the agency) and for which the Government approves payment of training costs prior to the commencement of such training. Nothing contained in Section G below shall be construed as limiting the authority of an agency to waive, **in whole or in part**, an obligation of an employee to pay expenses incurred by the Government in connection with the training.

Section G EMPLOYEE'S AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE IN SERVICE

1. I AGREE that, upon completion of the Government-sponsored training described in this request, if I receive salary covering the training period, I will serve in the agency three times the length of the training period. If I receive no salary during the training period, I agree to serve the agency for a period equal to the length of training, but in no case less than one month. (The length of part-time training is the number of hours spent in class or with the instructor. The length of full-time training is eight hours for each day of training, up to a maximum of 40 hours a week). NOTE: For the purposes of this agreement, the term "agency" refers to the employing organization (such as an Executive Department or independent establishment), not to a segment of such an organization.
2. If I voluntarily leave the agency before completing the period of service agreed to in item 1 above, I AGREE to reimburse the agency for the tuition and related fees, travel and other special expenses (EXCLUDING SALARY) paid in connection with my training. These amounts are reflected in items 21 and 22.
3. I FURTHER AGREE that, if I voluntarily leave the agency to enter the service of another Federal agency or other organization in any branch of the Government before completing the period of service agreed to in item 1 above, I will give my organization written notice of at least ten work days, during which time a determination concerning reimbursement will be made. If I fail to give this advance notice, I AGREE to pay the amount of additional expenses (5 U.S.C. 4109(a)(2)) incurred by the Government in this training.
4. I understand that any amounts which may be due the agency as a result of any failure on my part to meet the terms of this agreement may be withheld from any monies owed me by the Government, or may be recovered by such other methods as are approved by law.
5. I FURTHER AGREE to obtain approval from my organization training officer and the person responsible for authorizing non-government training requests of any proposed change in my approved training program involving course and schedule changes, withdrawals or incompletions, and increased costs.
6. I acknowledge that this agreement does not in any way commit the Government to continue my employment. I understand that, if there is a transfer of my service obligation to another Federal agency or other organization in any branch of the Government, the agreements in items 1, 2, and 3 of this section will remain in effect until I have completed my obligated service with that other agency or organization.

| | |
|--|------|
| 31. Period of obligated service (Fornon-governmenttrainingonly) _____ | |
| 32. Employee's signature | Date |